

THE National Guard: An Operational Force for the 21st Century

by

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The National Military Strategy relied on the Reserve Component, specifically the Army National Guard, as a strategic as opposed to an operational reserve prior to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the early 1990s. With the onset of the global war on terrorism in 2001, operationally ready Army National Guard forces are necessary to meet and sustain the troop requirements of the Geographical Combatant Commander (GCC). Readiness and effective employment of the Army National Guard requires a mission set and policy to ensure continuous engagement with viable missions for readiness and continued partnership with the Active Component. This paper examines the United States historical reliance on militia and reserve component forces to provide for the defense of the nation. It will examine the Army's implementation of the Abrams doctrine and transition to a total force. It also examines the feasibility and challenges of maintaining the Army National Guard as an operational reserve and the implications of maintaining operational readiness. Finally, it will conclude with some insights into the way ahead for sustaining the Army National Guard as an operational force for the twenty-first century.

THE National Guard: An Operational Force for the 21st Century

The Guard has proven itself it really has to be the force of first choice, not a force of last resort, across many of our vital missions. And we can't return to viewing and utilizing the National Guard merely as a strategic reserve to be deployed only in the event of emergency. That means we have to continue to invest in training and equipment. We've got to work harder to incorporate the men and women of the Guard into ongoing military operations by judiciously utilizing their skills and their capabilities as part of our strategic total force. You've got to be part of that.

—Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta, 8 November 2011¹

The National Guard traces its origins to the militias of the 13 original English colonies in North America. Its founding units were organized on December 13, 1636 in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which makes the National Guard the oldest component of the armed forces of the United States. These Militias were initially formed for the purpose of self defense but later became a critical and decisive component in winning the American Revolution. The Continental Army was established on 14 June, 1776 through a resolution by the Continental Congress for the purpose of consolidating and coordinating the military efforts of the revolution. General George Washington was placed in charge of the new army and remained in command throughout the war. While Washington despaired greatly on the lack of training and performance of the militia forces, he was also dependent on them. The American Revolution would be the first instance in American history of active and reserve component forces working together.² This relationship of a standing army supported by Citizen Soldiers is an enduring concept for American Military forces and is represented in the total military force of today.

Today's Reserve Component

The Reserve Component (RC) of today is made up of seven components spread across five Services and consists of the Army and Air National Guard and the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Air Force Reserves. The total authorized strength for all Services in 2010 was over 2.3 million.³ Of that number, the authorized end strength for all active components was approximately 1.5 million and a reserve component authorized end strength of almost 900 thousand, making the reserve component 37 percent of the total force.⁴ For the Army this percentage is much higher. In 2010 the active Army authorized end strength stood at 562,000 with the Army National Guard and Army Reserve totaling 563,000, making it 50 percent of the total Army force.⁵

In framing the U.S. Constitution, the founding fathers granted Congress the power “to provide and maintain a Navy,” but limited its power with respect to the Army by stipulating that it can “raise and support armies, but no appropriation of money to that use shall be for a longer term than two years.”⁶

In contrast, the Founders granted Congress the power to “provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions.”⁷ In lieu of a large standing army, the nation would purposefully rely on Citizen Soldiers to rise up and fight when called upon by the federal government. This historical context illustrates not only America's willing embrace of the role of the Citizen Soldiers, but their initially dominant role in defending the nation. Although their role has changed over time, National Guard and Reserve forces have been employed in every major military conflict from the Battle of Lexington in 1775 to the current War on Terror.⁸

When the civil war began in April 1861 existing militia units from both the North and South made up a significant portion of their respective armies. The federal army was further augmented by volunteer regiments authorized and paid for by the federal government but raised by the individual states. Over the course of the war it is estimated that close to 2 million Citizen Soldiers served in the Union Army and approximately 900 thousand in the Confederate Army. As a result, the largest percentage of Civil War battle streamers is carried by Army National Guard units.⁹

In 1898, National Guard units distinguished themselves in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. The most famous unit of the war was a cavalry unit partly recruited from Texas, New Mexico and Arizona National Guardsmen, Teddy Roosevelt's "Rough Riders."¹⁰

In 1899 because most of the regular Army was engaged in fighting in Cuba, three quarters of the first U.S. troops to fight in the Philippines were from the National Guard.¹¹ The Army sent in 100,000 Soldiers mostly from the National Guard and the rebellion collapsed in March 1901.

Federalization of the National Guard

The Militia Act of 1903 established the National Guard as a federally funded reserve component of the nation's armed forces and opened the way for modernization as well as increased Federal control over the National Guard.¹² This law provided two million dollars of federal funding for training and equipment. National Guard Soldiers received approximately thirty days of federally funded training. National Guard units were inspected by active duty teams to evaluate their level of training and proficiency. If the unit failed the inspection it could result in the loss of funding.¹³

In 1908 the act was amended to eliminate the ban on Guard units serving outside the United States and clearly established the Guard's role as the Army's reserve force. The amendment also stated that during a mobilization, the Guard had to be utilized before the Army could organize a federal volunteer force.¹⁴

At the outbreak of WW I in 1917, the National Guard played a major role by contributing 16 divisions to the fight for a total of 40% of the U.S. combat divisions in France. Three of the first five U.S. Army divisions to enter combat in World War I were from the National Guard.¹⁵

In December 1941, America entered WW II with a total of 27 divisions, 9 Regular Army, and 18 National Guard. President Franklin D. Roosevelt quickly doubled the size of the army by mobilizing the National Guard. Mobilized observation squadrons, the forerunner to the Air National Guard, were instrumental in expanding the assets of the Army Air Corps. National Guard units such as the 164th Infantry Regiment from North Dakota and the 34th Infantry Division from Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota were some of the first to enter combat operations.¹⁶

As the army rapidly expanded and deployed additional divisions for WW II, they urgently needed qualified and experienced officers and non-commissioned officers to provide necessary leadership to these new units. During the course of the war, over 75,000 National Guard enlisted men became commissioned officers, either through Officer Candidate School or by battlefield commissions.¹⁷

National Guard units serving in World War II participated in 34 separate campaigns and numerous assault landings in both the European and Pacific Theaters of Operation and received 148 presidential unit citations. Individual Guardsmen

received 20 Medals of Honor, 50 Distinguished Service Crosses, 48 Distinguished Flying Crosses and over 500 Silver Star Medals.¹⁸

On 25 June 1950 North Korea crossed the 38th parallel, and attacked South Korea. On 30 November 1950, the United Nations passed a resolution condemning North Korea's actions and the US and 15 other UN members sent forces to assist South Korea. As part of that effort, 6 infantry divisions were mobilized from the Army National Guard.¹⁹

The mobilizations occurred in 19 separate increments, with units reporting for active duty between Aug. 14, 1950, and Feb. 15, 1952. The first Army National Guard units reached South Korea in late December and included engineer, field artillery and transportation units. Three Army National Guard artillery battalions won Presidential Unit Citations for supporting US Army and Marine Corps divisions.²⁰

In late 1951 and early 1952, the Army National Guard's 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions were sent to Korea to replace the Army's 1st Cavalry and 24th Infantry Division. Both Divisions were occupying positions along the 38th parallel when the signing of an armistice at Panmunjom finally ended the fighting on July 27, 1953.²¹ Over 138,000 Army Guard and 45,000 Air Guard troops were mobilized for the conflict. These numbers accounted for more than 30 percent of the Army Guard total strength, and 80 percent of the Air Guard.²²

America had military advisors in South Vietnam as early as 1955, but many consider 7 August 1961 as the official start of the Vietnam War. On that date, Congress approved The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson the necessary use of force to repel or prevent further attacks against U.S.

forces in South Vietnam.²³ This authorization is seen as the official start of the war and marked the escalation of U.S. involvement and the transition by American Forces from an advisory role to active combat operations.

Early in the war, President Johnson made the decision not to mobilize the National Guard and Army Reserve and instead made the political decision that the military would fight the war using active component forces and would meet future troop requirements through the use of volunteers and draftees.²⁴ The President's decision would profoundly affect the manner in which the Army supported and sustained the eventual expansion of forces. The use of the draft to meet the military's manpower requirements proved unpopular with the American public.²⁵ It contributed to the massive antiwar movement in the United States and involved people from every segment of society including civilians, students and Soldiers.

As the war expanded and the need for additional military personnel escalated, President Johnson found it increasingly difficult to meet both the demands of the theater commander, and maintain a strategic reserve force.²⁶ By the spring of 1962, the need to ensure a strong strategic force prompted the President to activate 40,000 members of the National Guard and Army Reserve. This activation constitutes the only use of the reserve component during the Vietnam War.

To meet the requirements for additional combat forces, the Army had to increase its active strength from 960,000 in 1964 to nearly 1.5 million men by 1968.²⁷ It did this through a combination of voluntary enlistments, involuntary extensions, and ever increasing draft calls. President Johnson's failure to mobilize the Army National Guard and Reserve and the reliance on the draft caused critical operational and morale issues

for the Army. As the Army expanded to meet troop demands they were forced to rely heavily on draftees. New units were hastily built and leadership was in short supply. As a result, experience levels fell.²⁸ This hasty growth did not come without a price. Forty percent of officers and 70 percent of enlisted Soldiers had less than 2 years of service. Discipline broke down, Soldiers refused to follow the orders of their officers, and the Army suffered from low morale.²⁹

All men between the ages of 18 and 26 were eligible to be drafted. However, there were a variety of deferments, postponements, and exemptions available such as occupational, student enrollment, medical disqualification, or having children.³⁰ Those men without exemptions or resources to avoid military service often became draft induced volunteers. Upon receiving their notification, many joined one of the reserve components knowing that the chance of activation and deployment to Vietnam was virtually non-existent. Others signed up with the Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard for the same reason. Those draftees who voluntarily enlisted in the Army or Marine Corps did so to pick their military occupational specialty and avoid serving in the infantry.³¹

Many potential draftees not eligible for deferment believed they had nothing to lose and became part of the growing anti war protesters. Many students protested the war knowing that after graduation or dropping out of college they became immediately eligible for the draft. Drafted Soldiers who now found themselves fighting and dying in a war they did not support also became war protesters. During the Vietnam War, draft evasions and resistance reached historic proportions and nearly crippled the Selective Service System.

The All Volunteer Force

In November 1969, Richard M. Nixon was elected as President and came to office committed to ending the draft. President Nixon appointed Melvin R. Laird as Secretary of Defense and charged him to eliminate the draft, reduce the American presence in South Vietnam, and reduce the size of the army. Secretary Laird's goal was to end the draft by 30 June 1973 and replace it with an all volunteer force. In his first year, he reduced the draft to 300,000, 200,000 in the second, 100,000 in the third, and 50,000 in the fourth. In January 1973, Secretary Laird suspended the draft completely.³²

Between 1964 and 1975, 8.7 million served in the U.S. armed forces. Of those, over 3.4 million were deployed to Southeast Asia.³³ Of that number, twenty one percent or 1.8 million were Draftees.³⁴ Despite the limited number of National Guard Soldiers that deployed to Vietnam, approximately 55 Silver Stars, 681 Purple Hearts, one Distinguished Flying Cross, 16 Distinguished Service Medals, six Legions of Merit and over 1,000 Bronze Stars were awarded over the course of the war.³⁵

At a deeper level, the Johnson administration's decision against calling the Reserves to active duty sent the wrong signal to friends and enemies alike. It implied that the nation's political leaders lacked the resolution necessary to achieve American objectives in South Vietnam. For years afterwards, the National Guard was considered by many as an organization where people went to avoid fighting in the war. The organization was viewed as poorly trained, unprofessional, and unnecessary. It would not be until Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990 that RC forces would be called upon in large numbers and prove their relevance and worth as part of the total force.

The Total Force

In conjunction with the elimination of the draft and the transition to an all volunteer force, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird announced the Total Force concept in August 1970. The total force concept would provide for a smaller AC force for immediate response to national defense needs while relying on the RC to provide units to larger long term conflicts. The Guard and Reserves would become the primary source to reinforce the active duty military and would be called upon before other methods such as growing the AC or reinstating a draft. A total force concept would be applied to all aspects of planning, programming, manning, equipping, and employing the RC.³⁶

In August 1973, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger furthered his predecessor's work by announcing the Total Force Policy. The Total Force Policy established the RC as the augmentation to the AC for any and all contingencies. The Chief of Staff of the Army, Creighton W. Abrams believed the lack of a reserve component call up for the Vietnam War had been a tragic mistake and was determined that the Army should never again go to war without the support of the Country.³⁷ Abrams believed that the National Guard and Army Reserve provided a direct link between the American people and the Regular Army.

Abrams wanted to increase the Army from 13 divisions to 16 and used the Total Force Policy to achieve that objective. In 1973, he implemented what later became known as the "Abrams Doctrine" and transferred much of the AC Combat Support and Combat Service Support units to the RC. Abrams also created RC Maneuver Roundout Brigades and Battalions. These Roundout units would be affiliated with active divisions and would train, mobilize and deploy with them in the event of war. In 1974, Abrams

announced the Army force structure would increase to 16 combat-ready divisions by 1978.³⁸ By 1990 just prior to Desert Shield, the Army National Guard consisted of over 450,000 Soldiers and made up 46% of the combat, 32% of the combat support, and 26% of the combat service support forces in the total Army.³⁹

The Persian Gulf War began on 7 August 1990 with Operation Desert Shield. On August 22, 1990, President George W. Bush, utilizing the provisions found in the Presidential Select Reserve Call-up, began mobilization of Reserve Component forces.⁴⁰ This mobilization began the buildup of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia and the preparation for offensive combat operations to expel the Iraqi military from Kuwait. By the end of the Gulf War approximately 250,000 Reservists had been called to active duty. Over 106,000 Reservists deployed to Southwest Asia in direct support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm while the remaining Reservists backfilled Active Component forces in the Continental US and other areas such as Europe and Okinawa.⁴¹

The RC mobilization in support of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm was the largest since the Korean War and was a major change to the policies regarding their use during the Vietnam War. The restructuring and reallocation of forces under the Abram's doctrine ensured that the Nation would never again go to war without the National Guard and Reserve. It would be the first test of the new total force policy and was not without problems. The elimination of the draft in 1973 and the implementation of the all volunteer Army eliminated many personnel issues and improved unit discipline and moral within both the AC and RC. However, there remained a strong perception among the AC that RC forces continued to be poorly trained and prepared and could

not achieve the required level of proficiency to deploy with AC forces in a timely manner.

The mobilization of the National Guard affected units in most of the 54 states and territories, including Washington. The Army National Guard activated more than 390 units nationwide.⁴² The majority of the first Army Guard units to be mobilized were transportation, quartermaster, and military police units. The Army activated five ARNG combat brigades and one Special Forces group. Three of these Brigades were maneuver and two were field artillery. The three maneuver brigades were round out brigades for the AC and as such should have deployed with their AC Division. All five Brigades deployed to their mobilization station between 6 to 20 days of being federalized. The artillery brigades completed their post mobilization training and were validated by the AC, one in 39 days and the other in 55 days. These units arrived in Saudi Arabia in time to participate in Operation Desert storm and provided critical fire support to maneuver units.

Despite the successful mobilization and deployment of the two Artillery Brigades and numerous Combat Support and Combat Service Support units, Secretary of Defense Richard B. Cheney and the AC leadership chose not to immediately mobilize the three Roundout maneuver brigades for the initial defense of Saudi Arabia and Operation Desert Shield. Cheney chose instead to replace them with AC maneuver brigades from other AC divisions.⁴³ As plans shifted from Operation Desert Shield and the defense of Saudi Arabia to Operation Desert Storm and offensive operations to recapture Kuwait from Iraq, the three Roundout maneuver brigades were eventually mobilized for active duty. This did not change the attitude of the AC component

leadership towards using the Roundout maneuver brigades for Operation Desert Storm. Cheney stated that "I want to be absolutely certain that units drawn from the Guard and Reserve have the opportunity for the additional workup training our people think they require... before they go; they need to go to the National Training Center to get into shape as if they were an active duty division."⁴⁴ Ironically, none of the AC brigades chosen to replace the RC Roundout brigades were required to complete a National Training Center rotation prior to deploying to Saudi Arabia.⁴⁵

Operation Desert Storm commenced on 17 January 1990 and ended on 28 February 1990.⁴⁶ As a result of the delay in mobilization, changing validation requirements, equipment issues, and the unwillingness of AC trainers and evaluators to certify the maneuver brigades as trained and ready, the three Roundout Brigades did not deploy to Saudi Arabia. By the end of offensive operations, the three Maneuver Brigades had spent a total of three months conducting post mobilization training. During the course of this time, only one brigade was validated. Two National Guard Artillery Brigades activated at the same time as the three maneuver brigades did mobilize, complete post mobilization training in less than 60 days, and deploy to Saudi Arabia in time to participate in Operation Desert Storm.⁴⁷ The participation of RC units in Desert Shield and Desert Storm was viewed as validation that the total force concept worked.

Transition to an Operational Force

Throughout the remainder of the 1990s and early 2000s, the National Guard continued to move toward transitioning from a strategic to an operational force. During that time, components of the National Guard participated in the following missions: 1993 - Somalia (Restore Hope), 1994 to 1996 - Haiti (Uphold Democracy) 1995 to 1999 - Bosnia (Joint Guard/Joint Forge/ Joint Endeavor) 1998 to 1999 - Southwest Asia

(Southern Watch) 1999 to Present - Kosovo (Allied Force).⁴⁸ These were not the traditional combat missions of the past but a collection of humanitarian and peace support operations.

The implementation of the total force policy had worked. While the AC still maintained the ability to quickly respond to national security issues anywhere in the world, it required RC augmentation in order to conduct sustained operations. An example of this is the peace support operations to the Balkans. From 2000 to 2001, the SFOR Mission in Bosnia was commanded by National Guard Divisions. This marked the first time since the implementation of the total force policy that AC units were assigned to an RC command.⁴⁹ These missions brought the AC and RC closer to institutionalizing the Total Force Concept and transitioning to an operational reserve. The missions would be instrumental in preparing the force for the events of 11 September 2001 and the Global War On Terror that was to follow.

The Long War

The Nation has now been at war for over 11 years, fighting in both Afghanistan and Iraq while providing for the defense of the homeland. The total force is no longer a concept but a fact. The RCs of each Military Service have provided capable forces to support a wide variety of urgent operational needs. Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, the National Guard alone has mobilized over 660,000 Soldiers and Airmen in support of homeland defense and overseas contingency operations. More than half of all National Guard members today are combat veterans.⁵⁰ This interdependence was noted in the 2011 Army Posture statement.

The Nation has been at a state of national emergency for nine and a half years. As a result, the Army has had continuous access to the reserve component through partial mobilization. The Army National Guard and Army Reserve have performed magnificently, and the relationship between the components is better than it has ever been. Our Soldiers have fought together and bled together, and more than ever, we are one Army, a Total Force. Our Nation cannot lose the enormous gains we have made.⁵¹

In the 2013 National Guard Posture Statement, the Chief of the National Guard Bureau General Craig R. McKinley stated "The Department of Defense recognizes the National Guard as an irreplaceable and cost-effective element of the Total Force. As such, Army National Guard and Air National Guard members have become fully integrated into Army and Air Force operations."⁵²

We can no longer fight our nations wars relying on a large standing AC force augmented by an RC force that is ill equipped and slow to mobilize. We have transitioned to an age of persistent global conflict requiring a much more flexible and agile force capable of rapidly expanding to meet the needs of the threat.

As a result of the total force integration and the operational tempo required to provide a steady, reliable supply of manpower to fight the Global War On Terror, the military has been compelled to transition the RC from a strategic force to an operational force. The current debate is not really about whether to increase operational reliance on the reserve forces of the U.S. Army for national defense. That decision was made in 1973 with the Total Force Policy and the end of the Draft.⁵³ Current debate is over the right mix of AC and RC forces and the risk involved in relying on a smaller expeditionary Army continuously generating forces to source requirements in an era of persistent conflict, to meet National security objectives.

Defining the Operational Reserve

In order to understand the RC transition from a strategic force to an operational force, we must first define the difference. A strategic reserve is a military organization composed of citizens of a country who combine a military role or career with a civilian career and their main role is to be available to fight when a nation mobilizes for total war or to defend against invasion. Reserve forces are generally not considered part of a permanent standing body of armed forces. Traditionally, U.S. Reserve Component forces have served as this country's strategic reserve and mobilized only as part of American grand strategy, the force that is brought to bear when massive danger confronts the nation, as in World War II. Conversely, an operational reserve is one that supports the national defense strategy across the full spectrum of military operations, including sustained operational missions, emergent contingency operations, and service during national emergencies or in time of war.⁵⁴

The concept of an operational reserve is now embodied in Department of Defense (DoD) policy under directive 1200.17, "Managing the Reserve Component as an Operational Force." This document states:

The RCs provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict. In their operational roles, RCs participate in a full range of missions according to their Services' force generation plans. Units and individuals participate in missions in an established cyclic or periodic manner that provides predictability for the combatant commands, the Services, Service members, their families, and employers. In their strategic roles, RC units and individuals train or are available for missions in accordance with the national defense strategy. As such, the RCs provide strategic depth and are available to transition to operational roles as needed.⁵⁵

This statement indicates that while the RC will be sustained as an operational force, it will also be relied upon to continue to provide strategic depth. This will require

careful management of dwindling resources and smaller force structure to ensure a balanced force capable of meeting the operational needs of today's persistent conflicts while maintaining the ability to respond to large scale total war of the past.

In many respects the RC is being used operationally today, it does not mean they are already a sustainable operational force.⁵⁶ While the transformation of the RC from a strategic force to a fully operational force happened out of necessity over the course of years, deliberate plans to transform the RC is a relatively recent initiative.

Completing the Transition

In 2004 the Congress established the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves (CNGR) to assess the roles, missions, and capabilities of the National Guard and Reserves and to recommend changes to best meet the national security needs of the current strategic environment. The final report from this Commission was submitted to Congress on 31 January 2008; it provides 6 conclusions and 95 recommendations to the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) and Congress to formally transform the RC into an operational force for the 21st Century.⁵⁷

The Commission came to the conclusion that for the foreseeable future, there is no reasonable alternative to the Nations reliance on reserve components as part of an operational force.⁵⁸ Since the final report, many of the CNGRs recommendations have been implemented; however, many CNGR proposals are very complex and will take years or decades to be implemented.

The systemic issues that have plagued RC transition from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve capable of rapid and sustained deployments can be categorized into the following areas: manning, equipping, and training.

Manning

The most difficult of these issues is Manning the force. In the past the RC forces were manned in a tiered level of readiness. Tiered readiness was an acceptable approach when the demand for operational forces allowed for rare deployments.

Under the tiered readiness approach, every unit had a required strength and an authorized strength. The required strength is the number of personnel required for the unit to be fully manned (100%). Authorized strength was the number of personnel that the unit was allowed to fill (always some number less than 100%). High priority RC units aligned with specific contingency plans had a higher authorized rate, usually 90%. Units with lower priority were commonly authorized an 80% fill rate. Regardless of a unit's authorized strength, under the strategic force concept, it was expected that units would have the necessary post mobilization time to fill the unit to its required strength.

Factors compounding this issue were Soldiers who did not meet the medical and dental requirements for deployment. Units would mobilize at the authorized rate of 80% to 90%. An initial Soldiers Readiness Process (SRP) conducted at the unit's home station would often identify between 10 and 25% of assigned Soldiers with medical or dental issues that prevented them from deploying. Upon arrival at the mobilization station, subsequent medical screening would often identify an additional 5% to 15% of the Soldier's required medical or dental treatment in order to meet deployment requirements. Between mobilization and deployment, a unit could lose 15% to 40% of its pre-deployment Soldiers to health and dental issues. The second and third order effects of this on the mobilization station were overwhelmed medical and dental facilities, an increase in request for fills, extensive post mobilization training, and a disruption of the Time Phased Force Deployment (TIPFID) schedule. This prompted

National Guard State Leadership to begin cross leveling Soldiers from other non-deploying units to meet current mobilization requirements, further exacerbating the issue for future deployments.⁵⁹

Equipping

For the National Guard to perform as an operational force, it must be fielded and equipped with the same modern equipment as the AC force in order to integrate seamlessly into joint operations as part of the total force. The 2008 Commission on the National Guard and Reserve (CNGR) identified significant equipment issues. Their analysis indicated that units and individuals from all components are well equipped and supplied when mobilized in support of federal missions such as peace support operations or the GWAT. However, many units not scheduled for deployment had a much lower level of equipment and supply readiness. In order for these units to mobilize, they must be trained on the equipment that they will use while deployed. Lack of access to this equipment means that pre mobilization training tasks must be retrained as part of the post mobilization training, wasting valuable training time, and extending the number of days required at the mobilization station.

In December 2007, the Army National Guard had 75% of its required equipment on hand, but only 55% of the modern equipment required for FY 2013. If current budget plans are adhered to, the National Guard will be equipped to 90% of required equipment by 2019.⁶⁰ Since 9/11, the Army has allocated more than \$41 billion to equip the ARNG with critical new equipment and capabilities. As a result the percentage of fully modern inter-operable equipment has increased to 88%.⁶¹ Maintaining this force modernization is a crucial component to maintaining an operational reserve with the strategic capacity to surge the force for larger conventional operations.

Training

Manning and equipping are irrelevant without training. Under the strategic reserve model, it was assumed that a unit would arrive at the mobilization station having conducted limited collective training and would receive 90 to 120 days of post mobilization training under the supervision and control of the AC. As the GWOT expanded from Operation Noble Eagle to include Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom and months extended into years, troop requirements to fight the war increased exponentially. When the Undersecretary of Defense implemented the 12 month mobilization policy in 2007,⁶² it forced the National Guard to minimize mobilization station training time to maximize the number of days in the theater of operation often referred to as Boots On the Ground (BOG). Every day a unit spent in post mobilization training at the mobilization station was a day it would not be in theater fighting the war. As a result, National Guard units preparing to deploy needed to accomplish as many mobilization tasks as possible at home station. In conjunction with greater pre-mobilization training came the requirement to validate as much of that training as possible.

To reduce a unit's time at the mobilization station, specific post-mobilization training tasks and requirements had to be identified for training and validation as part of pre-mobilization training. FORSCOM is responsible for the development of mobilization regulations for the entire reserve component. It is the responsibility of 1st Army to ensure that the units are aware of these requirements and that the units complete all required tasks to standard prior to deployment. FORSCOM specifies the required training tasks for alerted units so the units have a checklist prior to their deployment.⁶³

An RC unit receiving an alert notification 18 months prior to mobilization can reduce the post-mobilization training time by as much as 42 days.

The Adjutant General of each state has the responsibility for validating the post-mobilization training conducted at home station prior to mobilization. To assist an Adjutant General in this validation process, the National Guard Bureau (NGB) established Post-Mobilization Training and Assistance Elements (PTAEs) in each state and territory.

All pre-mobilization training requirements must be carefully monitored and documented to ensure all training standards are met. PTAEs have developed plans and procured equipment to ensure they are capable of meeting these challenges. PTAEs give the states the ability to accomplish many post-mobilization tasks at a unit's home station as part of their pre-mobilization training, thus reducing the overall number of days required at the mobilization station while increasing the number of days of BOG in support to the combatant commander.

Generating the Force

As the RC transitions from a strategic force to an operational force, the methods used to access and employ that force must also change. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert storm the RC was still considered strategic forces operating under the mobilization concept of mobilize, train, deploy. Units were structured along a tiered readiness model. Units were aligned with existing Operational Plans and Time Phased Force Deployment (TPFD) tables were developed for executing mobilization time lines. Mobilization under this model required extensive post-mobilization training and proved to be insufficient to achieve near simultaneous deployment with AC forces.⁶⁴

In 2006 the Army replaced its linear force management model based on tiered readiness and sequential deployments, with the ARFORGEN model, which is based on progressive readiness and cyclical deployments.⁶⁵ The Army Force Generation model provided a new paradigm based on the concept of train, mobilize, and deploy in a continuous cyclic process. A properly synchronized ARFORGEN cycle will provide the predictability and stability necessary to resolve equipping and manning issues. A predictable training and deployment cycle will insure the maximum use of limited resources that contribute towards maintaining the Total RC as an operational force capable of simultaneous deployment with the AC while maintaining a strategic force capable of surging to meet the needs of a large scale war.⁶⁶

Conclusion

Transitioning the Army from three distinct organizations to a total force with operational and strategic missions has been a long and arduous process which began in 1974 with the implementation of the total force doctrine and the shift to an all volunteer force. In the past 11 years, the RC has proven itself to be an essential part of the total force. As operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are concluded, budgets and end strength are scheduled to decline. Much must be done to do more with less in an ever increasing volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment.

As a result of the total force policy and force integration, AC and RC must now operate as one united force to fight our Nation's wars. While significant progress has been made in personnel policies, training, and equipping, more work is needed, especially in the areas of policies and funding. The concept of utilizing the RC as an operational reserve capable of deploying simultaneously with the AC is only feasible if properly equipped and funded. Insufficient funding will create a hollow force incapable

of meeting the requirements of an operational reserve and will place the Nations security at risk.

The transition from the strategic reserve linear deployment model of mobilize, train, and deploy, to today's cyclic operational reserve model of train, mobilize, and deploy, was necessary to meet the operational needs of today's wars. In an age of persistent conflict, no one can predict with certainty what the next threat to the Nation will be. By utilizing the ARFORGEN model to manage RC force generation, up to 1/5 of National Guard force structure, nearly 71,000 Soldiers, will be immediately available for contingency operations with the remaining 4/5, over 280,000 Soldiers, available to provide strategic depth with a surge capability that is better manned, trained, and equipped than the strategic reserve of the cold war era.

The threat to the Nation has changed. While the possibility of fighting established standing armies of belligerent nation states still exists and must be planned for, it has proven far more likely that the Army will operate in an environment of persistent asymmetrical conflict against failed states and non-state actors. It is therefore imperative to the Nation's security that the National Guard and the RC as a whole, must continue to operate as an operational reserve, now, and into the 21st Century.

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